

Governor Carney Signs Executive Order Establishing Advisory Council on English Learners

Group will help monitor and implement Delaware's English Learner Strategic Plan 2022

WILMINGTON, Del. – Governor John Carney on Wednesday signed an executive order establishing the Advisory Council on English Learners to help implement Delaware's community driven English Learner Strategic Plan 2022.

"Our state's changing demographics require us to think differently about how we reach all Delaware students, and especially our English learners, to ensure they acquire the language skills they need to be ready for success in college, career, and life," said **Governor Carney**. "Delaware's English Learner Strategic Plan helps lay the groundwork for us to improve our delivery of services to these children. This council will help keep us accountable to the strategies and goals outlined in the plan."

Since 1997, the number of English learners in Delaware has increased by 433 percent. This school year, Delaware public K-12 schools serve nearly 12,000 English learners.

The plan's goals include:

- Engaging every English learner in high-quality instruction and assessment designed to meet individual needs.

- Fostering highly effective educators of English learners.
- Mobilizing the community and engaging the public to support English learners.
- Continuing to refine English learner education through intentional analysis of data.

“We are excited about the establishment of the Governor’s English Learner Advisory Council,” said **Mark Steele, Superintendent of the Indian River School District**. “As a district with a large ELL population, we believe this initiative will be extremely beneficial to our students. It is important that we dedicate as many resources as possible to helping ELL students be successful in the classroom and the council will certainly help Delaware schools achieve this goal.”

“In Delaware, we have a passion and history for doing right by each and all our students,” said **Oribel McFann-Mora, President of Delaware English Language Learners Teachers and Advocates**. “The inception of the Delaware English Learner Council is a tremendous step forward and moves us closer to realizing our EL Strategic Plan 2022. Prioritizing and revolutionizing our ELs’ education is long overdue. Let us all roll up our sleeves, collaborate and continue doing what’s right for our multitalented linguistically diverse students.”

“I learned English as a kindergartener in public schools. As I gained language skills at school, my parents learned, too, through me,” said **Michael Rodriguez, Associate Secretary at the Delaware Department of Education**, who was born in New Jersey to Puerto Rican parents who only spoke Spanish at home. “As principal of North Georgetown Elementary in the Indian River School District – which has a predominantly English learner population – I again saw how important supporting the whole family is for the development of the child.”

Governor Carney has appointed Javier Torrijos, of Dover, and

Guy Danjoint, of Milford, to co-chair the council. The Council's first meeting will be scheduled for June 26. The Council will submit annual reports to the General Assembly on the state's progress in each of the plan's key areas. The body includes school district representatives, parents, advocates, and a student, and will be staffed by the Department of Education.

"The Advisory Council on English Learners will help guide and implement the long overdue English Learner Statewide Strategic Plan," said **Javier Torrijos, chairman of the Delaware Hispanic Commission**. "It requires leadership and commitment from the very top to see it through and I want to thank both Governor Carney and Secretary Bunting for their vision and leadership."

In addition to the Council, Governor Carney's Fiscal Year 2019 budget proposal includes \$6 million for Opportunity Grant funding targeted to schools with the highest percentages of low-income and English learner students.

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Photo caption: Governor Carney visits an English learner classroom at North Georgetown Elementary.